

MANNA *in The wilderness*

Fall 1987

The Newsletter of the Las Vegas Catholic Worker

Vol. 2, No. 1

In the Spirit of Faithfulness

Dear friends,

I first encountered Moses on our morning coffee line. He slid his tall dark body in front of the long line of men who were waiting their turn. I poured him a cup while explaining that next time he should take his place in line. He did not like my suggestion. Immediately he exploded with a steady stream of hostile adjectives, which put my nervous system into high gear, and sent my heart into a heavy palpitating mode. He stepped back slowly, glaring in my direction and mumbling unintelligibly to the voices in his head.

Dorothy Day has often said that God is on the side of even the unworthy poor, and that we must continue to serve and forgive one another. Certainly I see this as the ideal in the Catholic Worker model of service. But I must admit at the time of that volatile exchange with Moses the sacrament of reconciliation was far from my mind and I wanted to pack up our coffee pot and go home.

But we stayed out there and a few days later Moses returned. He took his place in line and kept to himself. As he moved closer, I noticed dark brown spots caked about his collar. Cautiously I approached him. Reluctantly I inquired, "Are you okay?" With the

casual bluntness of a child, he removed his cap and bowed his head forward forcing me to stare directly at the gash that left a deep wound in his skull. In that moment I felt an unequivocally divine insistence that I relinquish my fears and see the Moses that God sees.

In our daily fragile efforts to serve we are sometimes tempted to abandon the task. But when we persist in the spirit of faithfulness we are not disappointed. The unfolding mystery of God's purpose sustains us, and we see that Moses is here to keep us moving toward the radical perfection of God's love.

To persist in the spirit of faithfulness, we need your financial support. As we begin our second year in Las Vegas, our ministries still include a daily morning coffee and food line, a hospitality house, a weekly soup kitchen, a weekly peace vigil, and a quarterly newsletter. Our funds are running low and we will need your generosity to continue.

In Christ,
Julia Occhiogrosso
Las Vegas Catholic Worker
St. John the Baptist House
1309 Gold Ave.
Las Vegas, NV 89106



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International Catholic Worker Gathering

by Jeff Dietrich

For her entire life Dorothy Day bore witness to the light amidst the darkness of human suffering and fratricidal conflict. She fed the hungry, comforted the afflicted and afflicted the comfortable. She sheltered the homeless, denounced injustice, and confronted the scandal of the arms race. Thus we chose to commemorate what would have been her 90th birthday with celebration, prayer, and nonviolent direct action at the place of greatest darkness in our culture: the Nevada Test Site.

Greeted and cheered by Dom Helder Camara, the much-loved, deeply spiritual, Nobel prize-winning Brazilian

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prelate, 220 Catholic Workers crossed the trespass line to be arrested at the test site on Sunday morning, November 8. Said Jonathan Parfrey of the Orange County Catholic Worker: "This is a unique and powerful event; it represents the first time in our over 50-year tradition that Catholic Workers have come together in one place at one time to speak as one voice. I think that everyone here shares that sense of excitement that comes from recognizing that we are breaking new ground, that we are making history."

Though Dorothy died in 1980, the light of her spirit shown brighter than ever on November 6, 7 and 8, as more than 500 of her disciples representing over 40 Catholic Worker communities joined Archbishop Dom Helder Camara, Cesar Chavez, and Shelley Douglass at Bishop Gorman High School in Las Vegas for the three-day event.

All of the speakers spoke eloquently of their devotion and gratitude to Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker movement, but it was Dom Helder Camara, the diminutive Brazilian prelate who flew in expressly for this event, that most deeply touched the gathering with his simple commitment and his profound spirituality. A long-time friend and great admirer of Dorothy Day, he said, "We are all of the same creator, members of the same human family, but sometimes when I am traveling around the world I feel as though I am a

foreigner. Now, here with you, I feel at home..."

In speaking of the Nevada Test Site, he said, "The test site is the symbol of the greatest power of destruction the world has ever known, but your movement must be a demonstration of nonviolent love that will oppose this destruction."

"A Christian does not have the right to lose hope. It is 2000 years since the birth of Christ and what is the world situation? Sixty percent of humankind is living in subhuman conditions. This is injustice for we are all sons and daughters of God... We have only 13 years until the second millenium. What kind of world can we create by then?"

"We have the power to suppress God's life. We are anti-creators, able to destroy life itself."

"Help us, Father, for we are weak. The creation was your idea. You cannot leave it. The Nevada movement will win."

Though we have not yet won, far from it, we were nonetheless grateful for the opportunity to reflect the light of Dorothy's prophetic witness into the darkness of the Nevada Test Site.

Jeff Dietrich is a member of the Los Angeles Catholic Worker.

PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD Beginning November 29th

Sunday Evenings in Advent, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
at the Federal Building, 300 S. Las Vegas Blvd.

*Singing • Scripture Reading • Praying
Sharing • Passing the Peace*

LVCW VOLUNTEERS Live-in full time help needed.

Tel: (702) 647-0728

LVCW WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Monday - Saturday, 6:30 - 8:30 a.m.

Serve coffee at D and Bonanza Streets.

Wednesdays, 5:30 p.m.

Liturgical Celebration at St. John the Baptist House,
1309 Gold Ave. Potluck dinner to follow.

Thursdays, 4:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Serve dinner meal at St. James the Apostle
Church, 821 N. H St.

Fridays, 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Stop Testing Vigil at Federal Building,
300 S. Las Vegas Blvd.

To volunteer for any of these activities, call
(702) 647-0728

SIGN ME UP!

Yes. I want to receive **MANNA**, the L.V.C.W. Newsletter.

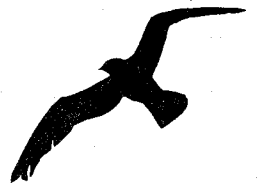
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